



ME AND MY FAMILY

1. Why a book on family?	2
2. What will this book do?	2
3. Teaching Moments in this book	3
Pages 4–9 The creation story of man and woman, created in the image of God, similar and yet uniquely different	3
Pages 8–9 Using correct terms for body parts.....	3
Pages 8–11; 13–15 Basics of sexual reproduction ..	3
Pages 18–19 The importance of parents in teaching values and disciplining children	4
Page 16–17; 20–27 How society today has varying meanings for relationships, parenting and even marriage	5
Pages 30–31 What it means to be a part of God’s family	5
4. Help for you	6

1. WHY A BOOK ON FAMILY?

Families are close to God's heart. In fact, they were his idea in the first place. From the beginning, when God created man, he said, 'It is not good for man to be alone', so he created woman as a 'helper, suitable for him' (Genesis 2:18). Then, he blessed them and told them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth' (Genesis 1:28). Even after they fell into sin, God continued with his plan for families, and even spoke prophetically of the salvation that would come through the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15).

However, we are aware that families today don't all fit into this pattern. Many children live in families with unmarried parents, whether in families with two biological cohabiting parents, two cohabiting step-parents, a single mother, or a single father. Children also reside in stepfamilies and foster families, and increasingly these are unmarried (cohabiting) rather than married families. They may also be with two parents of the same sex, or, in the absence of biological parents, be reared by grandparents.

2. WHAT WILL THIS BOOK DO?

This book will help you to discuss:

- the creation story of man and woman, created in the image of God, similar and yet uniquely different (pp. 4–9)
- the basics of sexual reproduction in an age-appropriate manner (pp. 10–15)
- the values, and the biblical basis for marriage and family (pp. 10–19)
- the importance of parents in teaching values and disciplining children (pp. 18–19)
- how society today has varying meanings for relationships, parenting and marriage (pp. 16–17; 20–27)
- what it means to be a part of God's family (pp. 30–31).



3. TEACHING MOMENTS IN THIS BOOK

PAGES 4–9 THE CREATION STORY OF MAN AND WOMAN, CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, SIMILAR AND YET UNIQUELY DIFFERENT

You will find the creation story in Genesis 1 and 2. Read this to your children using a children’s Bible.

Talk about God’s design for marriage and the family. This is a great time to introduce children to the concept of married couples being ‘one flesh’—a whole-life oneness between husband and wife. Emphasise to children the beauty of marriage, the love it is meant to communicate, and how this love is meant to overflow in physical affection and tenderness.

Share photographs and videos of yourself, your spouse and family and discuss what it means to be a boy, girl, man, woman. This will be discussed in the book ‘Learning about Gender’.

Discuss your own family and that of your spouse (Who is in each family? Where did you live? What did you do together?).

Refer to the PDF diagrams of [male](#) and [female](#) genitals.

Activity: Identify the different parts. Keep it aside to use in the next activity.

Phrases you may need to explain

Page 5: ‘God made Adam in his own image.’

Page 6: Why it was ‘not good for Adam to be on his own’.

PAGES 8–9 USING CORRECT TERMS FOR BODY PARTS

Below are two useful Bible passages which give a helpful framework for this conversation.

1 Corinthians 6:15–20 discusses how precious your child’s body is, to them, to you as their parent(s) and to Jesus.

Talk to your children about why you want them to know the right names for the ‘special’ parts of their body, and what they do.

There are (at least) three good reasons for this.

1. Learning this detail from you reduces the shame and guilt they may feel when their friends talk about these body parts in derogatory or humorous terms and manner. If you have spoken with them first about this, they will be more likely to speak to you about what they hear and see.

2. Your children will at some time be exposed to pornography. If you have discussed the beauty and significance of the body and the genitals, as well as sexual activity, in a factual manner as a gift from God, this will enable them to resist pornography, and come to you when they see it. We will discuss this in detail in the book ‘Learning about Pornography’.
3. Having this knowledge about their body will influence your child’s ability to communicate sexual abuse. You may be thinking, ‘Oh, sexual abuse would never happen to my kids!’ I hope this is true. However, it is important that you be there for your children if something should happen, and that they feel they can talk to you about these issues if they need to.

These are just some of the reasons why talking with your child about their body is a good thing.

Activity: Now, have your child label the parts of the body in the PDF drawings. Then, depending on their sex, ask them if they know where the penis, scrotum (for a boy); and vulva, breast (for a girl) are.

Do this in a matter of fact way. Start with asking the child to identify the non-genital parts of the body (for example, Where is your belly button? Where is your armpit?).

Phrases you may need to explain

Be prepared to discuss the difference between an ovum and a sperm.

PAGES 8–11; 13–15 BASICS OF SEXUAL REPRODUCTION

Use the Genesis 1 and 2 readings to discuss how marriage between a man and a woman is God’s plan.

Point out how sexual activity/sexual intercourse between a man and a woman in marriage is special: so special that God calls it a one-flesh activity.

This is discussed further in the book ‘Learning about sex’.

Share wedding photos, videos, funny stories of weddings. If you are a single parent, or carer, be gentle to yourself and the child and point out how not all families are like this.

Discuss how the sperm, being deposited in the vagina finds its way into the fallopian tubes and womb.



Discuss how this means a message from the mother (genes and chromosomes in the ovum) joins with a message from the father (genes and chromosomes in the sperm) to become one cell.

Discuss how this one cell becomes a baby.

Explain that the messages from the mother and father determine whether the baby will be a boy or a girl, and many of its characteristics.

Read Psalm 139:13–18. Use this or other Bible passages to discuss how God knows a baby from the moment he/she is formed.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Below are some references to help you in dealing with these issues:

- Women’s and Children’s Health Network, ‘Sexual reproduction—how babies are made’, *Kids’ Health*, <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?id=1613&np=289&p=335>
- Noelia De La Cruz, ‘Your baby’s journey from conception to birth’, *Parents*, <http://www.parents.com/pregnancy/my-baby/your-babys-journey-conception-to-birth/>

Phrases you may need to explain

Page 10: ‘Marriage happens when one man and one woman make promises ...’ Be ready for questions if your child has friends who are from different family structures, or if your own family is different from this in any way. These examples come up later in the book.

Page 14: ‘if there is an egg ready ...’ You may have to explain that the word ‘egg’ is another word for ‘ovum’ (see the fact box on page 8).

Also, it may be helpful to add that women produce only one egg a month.

PAGES 18–19 THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTS IN TEACHING VALUES AND DISCIPLINING CHILDREN

In Proverbs 22:6, the writer exhorts parents to ‘Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it’.

Reference to the early and constant nurturing of children goes right back to Deuteronomy 11:18–20.

The Apostle Paul brings together much of what Scripture says about family life:

‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honour your father and mother”—this is the

first commandment with a promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth”. Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.’ Ephesians 6:1–4.

Share what values and attitudes your parents taught you when you were growing up. How are things different now?

Consider some scenarios in which parents instruct children and children take their parents’ advice, and discuss how right/wrong these may be and what boundaries your children and you should set in these situations.

Suggested scenarios

1. Theo loves playing on his Tablet/iPad. His mum and dad want him to use it only at set times of the day and to leave it outside the bedroom when he goes to sleep at night. Theo is not happy.
2. Annie wants to go for a sleepover at her friend Jane’s place. Her friend is new to school and the neighbourhood. Annie’s mum tells her that since they don’t know Jane’s parents, they cannot give her permission. Annie is not happy.
3. Think of real life situations in your family.

Discuss

Why do you think mum and/or dad reacted this way?

Why do you think the son/daughter felt the way they did?

How do you think the parents and son/daughter could reach a decision?

How do you think Jesus would want you as a family to work this out?

Phrases you may need to explain

Page 18: ‘genetic information’: The sperm carries information from the father and the ovum (egg) carries information from the mother. So, when they come together the baby has some characteristics of the father and some of the mother.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- From the *Desiring God* website, David Mathis, ‘Good parents connect, not just correct’, *Desiring God*, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/good-parents-connect-not-just-correct>
- Patricia Weerakoon on ‘Parenting in a Cybergeneration’, <http://stbarnabas.davidblowes.com/sermons/message/parenting-in-a-cyber-generation-with-dr-patricia-weerakoon>



- More on parenting: Ed Moll and Tim Chester, 2011, 'Gospel-centred family', *The Gospel Coalition*, June 23, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/gospel-centred_family
- On disciplining children: Melissa Kruger, 2017, '5 principles for disciplining your children', *The Gospel Coalition*, May 18, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-principles-for-disciplining-your-children?>

PAGES 18–17; 20–27 HOW SOCIETY TODAY HAS VARYING MEANINGS FOR RELATIONSHIP, PARENTING AND EVEN MARRIAGE

Read some of the 'family' stories from the Bible.

Have you ever noticed how hard it is to find an example of what we would call a 'healthy family' in the Bible? It's a lot easier to find families with a lot of sin and a lot of pain than to find families with a lot of harmony. Here's just a sampling from Genesis:

- The first recorded husband and wife calamitously disobey God (Genesis 3).
- Sarah's grief over infertility moves her to give her servant, Hagar, to Abraham as a concubine to bear a surrogate child (Genesis 16). When Hagar has this child, Sarah abuses Hagar in jealous anger. Abraham is passive in the whole affair.
- Isaac and Rebecca play favourites with their twin boys, whose sibling rivalry becomes one of the worst in history (Genesis 25).
- Uncle Laban deceives his nephew Jacob by somehow smuggling his elder daughter Leah in as Jacob's bride instead of his younger daughter Rachel (Genesis 29). This results in Jacob marrying sisters—a horrible situation (see Leviticus 18:18). This births another nasty sibling rivalry where the sisters' competition for children (including giving their servants to Jacob as concubines) produces the twelve patriarchs of Israel (Genesis 30).
- Ten of Jacob's sons sell their brother Joseph into slavery. Then they lie about it to their father for 22 years until Joseph exposes them (Genesis 37, 45).

Families today are often far from perfect.

Talk about families in your neighbourhood and in your own extended family, being mindful of how much detail you include so as to keep the conversation age-appropriate.

Try drawing a family tree for your own family. You can find a step-by-step guide here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Draw-a-Family-Tree>

Ask your child what family situations his/her friends come from.

Go back to the book and discuss how God loves all the children, whatever family structure they may be in.

If God loves them, then we can love them too.

Phrases you may need to explain

Page 20: 'A man and a woman live together as if they were husband and wife and decide not to get married' If you feel the child is mature enough you could introduce them to the term 'de-facto relationship'.

Page 24: 'the other parent may not live with the family' If you feel the child is mature enough you could introduce them to the concept of divorce and shared parenting, widow and widower.

Page 27: 'that child can only share genetic information with one of the two adults' Be prepared to discuss how the sperm and ovum (egg) are brought together and after they join, then put into the mother's womb. This process is called 'artificial insemination'.

PAGES 30–31 WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

Read Ephesians 2, especially verses 18–22.

As a Christian, share your personal experiences of the family of God.

If you were a Christian as a child, explain what your experience of the family of God was like then, and later, as you grew older.

So far, we have discussed our earthly family. Belonging to these families is usually a good experience. Sometimes however it is not so good.

The family of God is of great value to the Lord, and we are adopted into it when we accept Jesus as our Saviour.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- A YouTube clip on 'God's family', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySz9ePVvwEA>



4. HELP FOR YOU

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ and the Father are one (John 1:1–4), and that he is also the Son of God (Hebrews 1:1–4). This familial term indicates that God regards Jesus as a family member. Christians are members of this family (Romans 9:8; 1 John 3:1–2).

How do we become a part of this family of God? When we hear the gospel, confess our sins, and place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we are adopted into God’s kingdom as his children and become heirs with him for eternity (Romans 8:14–17; Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:7).

Paul tells us of our new family when he writes: ‘The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him’ (Romans 8:16–17). We are children of God and fellow heirs with Christ. Before the foundation of the world God had us in mind. He created us and then he adopted us as his very own children.

Read more in this Gospel Coalition blog post: Bernard Howard, 2017, ‘What is this thing called church?’, *The Gospel Coalition*, May 24, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/what-is-this-thing-called-church?>

